

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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R 091555Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1267

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T PONTA DELGADA 340

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS VIEWS ON AZORES

REF: PONTA DELGADA 339

1. DURING SEPTEMBER 7 CONVERSATION (SEE REFTEL), PONTA DELGADA PS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEPUTY, JAIME GAMA, EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN THAT AZOREAN INDEPENDENCE MOVE WOULD HAVE DISASTROUS EFFECT ON MODERATES EFFORT TO GAIN CONTROL IN LISBON. HE WAS WORRIED THAT USG MIGHT SUPPORT FLA. I EXPLAINED USG HAD NEVER SUPPORTED FLA, ALWAYS MAINTAINED POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY, AND SHARED HIS ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE EFFECT IN LISBON OF INDEPENDENCE MOVE. FURTHERMORE, I SAID SEPARATIST LEADERS KNEW USG POSITION ON LAST POINT. GAMA HINTED HIS OWN POSITION ON INDEPENDENCE WOULD CHANGE IN CASE OF COMMUNIST VICTORY IN LISBON, NOW UNLIKELY.

2. GAMA CLAIMED EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS SEE USG POSITION IN AZORES AS VITAL TO USG EUROPEAN POLICY; IF US SUPPORTED AZOREAN INDEPENDENCE THAT WOULD SIGNAL ABANDONMENT OF EUROPE. ALTHOUGH NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED YET, HE CLAIMED UK AND FRG ARE PREPARED TO GRANT ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE AZORES.

3. GAMA BELIEVES FLA HAS PASSED ITS PEAK, AND WILL BEGIN TO LOSE SUPPORT AS MODERATES TAKE OVER GOP AND JUNTA REGIONAL TAKES CONTROL IN AZORES. FLA LOST ITS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

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WHEN IT DID NOT MOVE WHILE VASCO GONCALVEZ WAS IN OFFICE.

4. SOCIALISTS SUPPORT EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY FOR AZORES. GAMA SAID PS FAVORS CREATION OF ELECTED AZOREAN GOVERNMENT WITH POWER TO GOVERN LOCALLY AND CONTROL ECONOMY. AZOREAN ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE RIGHT TO SUGGEST AMENDMENTS TO LAWS PASSED IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS TO NATIONAL LAWS IN VIEW OF DIFFERENT AZOREAN CONDITIONS. PS, HOWEVER, OPPOSES GRANTING AZOREAN ASSEMBLY RIGHT TO VETO LAWS PASSED IN LISBON. SOCIALISTS FAVOR EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FOR AZORES INCLUDING ABILITY TO (A) EXPORT DIRECTLY WITHOUT GOING THROUGH LISBON, (B) SEEK FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND (C) DEVELOP REGIONAL BANKING SYSTEM UNDER WHICH MONEY DEPOSITED IN AZOREAN BANKS WOULD BE INVESTED IN AZORES.

5. GAMA SAID RELATIONS BETWEEN LAJES BASE AND COMMUNITY WOULD BE BETTER IF PERSONNEL PROBLEMS WERE RESOLVED, I.E., AN AMICABLE AGREEMENT ON WAGES FOUND. IN ADDITION HE ADVOCATED PAYING FAIR

RENT TO OWNERS OF LAND ON WHICH BASE STANDS, ALL SMALL LANDOWNERS PAID ON 1939 SCALE. LATTER IS GOP PROBLEM SINCE IT PAYS THE RENTS NOT USG. GAMA OPINED USG SHOULD BE PREPARED TO GRANT ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY TO AZORES UNDER NEW BASE AGREEMENT. HE MENTIONED PARTICULARLY SCHOLARSHIPS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

6. COMMENT: WE SHARE GAMAS VIEW THAT INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT MAY HAVE PASSED ITS PEAK. ANTI-COMMUNISM WAS ALWAYS POWERFUL MOTIVE FOR POPULAR SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENCE. IF THREAT OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OF PORTUGAL DEFINITELY REMOVED, THEN MUCH POPULAR SUPPORT GRADUALLY WILL FADE AWAY. IN ADDITION, AS PROSPECTS GROW FOR EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY GIVING AZOREANS LOCALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT AND MEASURE OF CONTROL OF OWN ECONOMY, MUCH OF THE ARGUMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE BASED ON ECONOMIC INJUSTICES AND GOP LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL CONDITIONS WILL ALSO DISAPPEAR. AZOREAN AUTONOMY, HOWEVER, WILL MEAN AZOREAN INTERESTS WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY BOTH GOP AND USG IN FUTURE BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

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